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ABSTRACT

Despite recession, economic displacement, and corporate downsizing, the demand for higher education in the United States continues to grow. In 1995, there were 14.5 million people seeking higher education, compared to 11.5 million in 1980 and 3.5 million in 1960. Moreover, the relationship between educational attainment and gaining employment has never been stronger. In 1979, for example, a male college graduate earned 49% more than a similar man with only a high school education, while in 1992 he earned 83% more. In the current political climate, however, cuts in federal student aid are likely. With respect to educational funding in the state of Ohio, cuts in staff of the House of Representatives have eliminated subcommittees and staff familiar with existing educational programs, making it easier to defund programs. According to national surveys, there is near universal agreement on the importance of a college education for finding a good job, but a growing sense that opportunities to attend college are declining and will get worse. In this climate of uncertainty, the quantitative, numerically-based assessment movement has taken hold, with the determination of program need often reduced to the terms of "too much duplication." The battle to preserve program funding, however, is a battle for access, and educators must remember that access of opportunity is the purpose of public institutions of higher education. (HAA)

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Recent Trendlines in Higher Education: Implications for Ohio's Community Colleges

presentation
to the President's Council
of the
Ohio Association of Community Colleges,

by

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Columbus, Ohio
January 11, 1995

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S.G. Katsinas

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

I. NATIONAL TREND OVERVIEW

1. **Demand for Higher Education continues unabated**
2. **Recent recession shows clear relationship between education and unemployment**
3. **Lower funding for federal Title IV need-based student aid is likely**
4. **Rising concern over access to higher education on the part of voters**
5. **Concern over access likely to grow as "the grand-children of WWII GIs" hit college age (Kerr, 1994)**
6. **Despite worldwide recognition as the world's finest collection of higher education institutions, at home U.S. higher education faces an image problem**
7. **At the state level, apparent trend of applying a K-12 accountability formula to public higher education**

1. Demand continues to grow...

1960 3.5 million

1970 about 8 million

1980 11.5 million

1990 13.5 million

1995 about 14.5 million

CONCLUSION: In the longer term, the demand for higher education grows despite recession, economic displacement following the end of the Cold War, corporate downsizing, and a more competitive world economy.

The long-term trend for community colleges is quite bright, in a world of continuous education. This bright future will occur despite any immediate short term enrollment drop following the end of this recession. Why? Because...

"Community colleges are the largest delivery system of formal education to adults in the United States" (Katsinas, 1994).

2. Education and unemployment...

There is a growing consensus across the political spectrum regarding the relationship between educational attainment and unemployment. That relationship has never been stronger and more direct, as U.S. Department of Labor statistics from the most recent recession demonstrated:

> **In 1979, a male college graduate earned 49% more than a similar man with only a high school education -- by 1992, however, the average male college graduate was earning 83% more than his high school graduate counterpart.**

> **Today, nearly 47% of American workers use computers on the job, compared to just 25% in 1984. But the computer revolution has deepened the division of the American workforce -- 2/3rds of college graduates use computers at work, but only one-third of high school graduates and fewer than one in ten high school dropouts.**

Recent Bureau of Labor Statistics data show that even in traditionally low-paying skill areas, the technicians of the future will have to have education beyond the high school.

> **"The information highway promises to speed some people to desirable destinations, but it may be leaving others stranded in the high-tech version of inner-city ghettoes."**
>
> **Robert Reich, 8/31/94**

3. Lower student aid funding likely

With new Congress, cuts in federal student financial likely; Ohio legislators are in key roles:

PELL GRANTS: At best, Congress will flat fund Pell for next two years, which means any inflation will be eaten by program itself. This means prospective 5% decline in Pell's purchasing power over the next two years at current inflation rate. If Congress writes rescission bill, it will come from the House of Representatives, and it could be much, much worse.

CAMPUS BASED AID--are on chopping block (CWS, Perkins Loans, capital contributions to the Perkins Loan revolving fund, and SEOG). Current funds in Perkins revolving fund could be cut NOW (they almost cancelled new revolving fund contributions for Perkins last year, so it's likely gone now).

DIRECT LOANS: Contract for America specifies end to in-school interest subsidies for all student who take loans. This could add 20 to 30% to the loan debt over the life of repayment of loans for students in future (accdg to Deborah Hynaman, a commissioner of OSAC and financial aid officer at MCO). The Goodling-Gordon House bill proposes capping participants in the direct loan program at the 40% who will be in it by the end of this year.

Congressman Bonilla (R-Texas) indicated that campus based student aid programs and SSIG would be included in a rescission bill that is planned for mid-February.

Will tuition tax credits help community colleges? No. Impact greatest in contract training, clustered in suburban areas.

KEY ROLES FOR OHIO REPS...

Little seniority left on most House Committees. Over 60% of all House members are new since 1990.

In the past, higher education looked to authorizing committees of House and Senate for leadership. But with cuts in staff, the subcommittees in the House no longer functionally exist as in past, in that staff are no longer attached directly to them.

With turnover and firings, staff attached to the Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee (old name of Ed Labor Committee) was cut from 80 (including secretaries) to 12 on the Democratic side. Republican committee staff cut from about 50 to 17 (includes all former staff of subcommittees like PSE).

In practical terms, for education there are only three profes-sioanl education staff people on Republican side, and only two on Democratic. Sally Stroup, formerly with Pennsylvania's state student aid assistance agency (which largely subsidizes private higher education), is Republican Staff Director. New Democratic counterpart is from Bill Clay's (D-St. Louis) staff.

A CHANGED ENVIRONMENT...

With all of the staff who knew how the programs worked cut, it is easier for House to move quickly to defund programs.

Additionally, the bill drafters in the House Clerk's staff were cut by 1/3rd. Not well known is that previous House Clerk staff only reviewed work of professional staff of old authorizing

committees. Thus, when staff was cut, so was ability to write bills. Power in House is therefore much more concentrated, and has moved from authorizing committees to the Speaker's leadership team, Budget, and Appropriations Committees.

A field day for lobbyists. They will write everything (major bills included), not just technical amendments like past.

On the Senate side...nothing changed, only few small cuts. OSAC staff was in House Monday. Hallways were jammed with stuff that needed to be moved. They can't even move new copy machines. Why? All the janitors were fired before the new Congress took over. That's why the new House met only two days in its first week, not all week as originally planned, because staff to write the bills for them to vote on was gone.

New name of old PSE is "Postsecondary Education, Training, and Lifelong Learning Subcommittee." Chair: McKeon (CA).

Rep. John Kasich, Columbus, Budget Committee Chair, will play major role in shaping entire program. David Hobson, Springfield, is second ranking member of Budget Committee. Ohio has Nos. 1&2 members on majority side of key committee.

John Boehner, sophomore on full Ed Labor committee, now on leave from committee, was recently promoted to leadership.

Senator DeWine assumed Senator Metzenbaum's former assignment on Labor and Human Resources Committee.

What should Ohio community colleges do?

My only suggestion is that working with David Baime at AACC, OACC might consider putting together an appropriate fact sheet of the impact of federal student aid on Ohio's community colleges, and perhaps arrange meeting with Cong. Kasich and Hobson at a local community college in the near future. GREAT FEAR of One Dupont Circle is a quick rescission bill.

4. Voters fear access decline.

Near universal agreement among Americans that a college education is a gateway to a good job. Nearly 8 of 10 Americans responded to the 1993 CHEPC survey that h.s. graduates should go to college "because in the long run they will have better job prospects." An even larger margin, 89% felt that society should not allow a lack of money to prevent a qualified and motivated student from getting a college education.

A 1991 ABC News/Washington Post survey found 65% of Americans believed that a "good college education is becoming too expensive." A September 1993 national survey for the California Higher Education Policy Center (CHEPC) found 60 percent of Americans believed that currently, many qualified students do not have the opportunity to go to college.

There is a strong sense that opportunities to attend college are declining, and that the situation will worsen. 55% responded to the 1993 CHEPC survey that getting a college education was more difficult than it was 10 years ago, and 66% think it will be even more difficult ten years from now.

Interestingly, favorite means to finance higher education was work. 53% opposed tuition increases, and 51% said admitting fewer students was a poor idea. By contrast, public more open to increasing class size (32% thought this was a poor idea).

A 1992 CBS News/New York Times survey found 82% supported idea that government should provide "loans to college students that they could pay back either by deductions from their paychecks or by two years of national service."

Clinton himself said he received a greater response to national service than any idea proposed on the campaign trail. But after the campaign, when it was time to add up the cost of a new entitlement of national service, cost came to $55-60 bil. Deficit reduction won the day.

Deep concern over loans: 91% believe that too many students take out college loans and never pay them back; 81% believe that it's a problem that students borrow too much money.

According to the CHEPC study, "The primary values of opportunity, reciprocity, and motivation also guide the public's thinking about the best means to pay for their college education. The most appealing approach is providing students with opportunities to work for financial aid to pay for their own education. Eighty percent think that we should use this approach more often." (likely that reciprocity of national service was key to its popularity)

5. Concern over access will grow...

Grandchildren of WWII GIs are about to reach college attending years. Will there be room for them?

Is Ohio ready?

Data from Ohio K-12 portend significant access problem.

A 1994 national study of State Higher Education Chief Fiscal Officers found that most state systems were at capacity now, and termed the current deferred maintenance backlog at their public colleges and universities to be "a ticking time bomb."

6. An Image Problem...

Support for higher education does not necessarily mean support for what colleges do to award degrees. 77% of Americans in CHEPC felt that many young people are "wasting their time and money in college because they don't know what to do with their lives," and 54% think the problem is that "too many people are going to college instead of alternatives to college where they can learn trades like plumbing or computer repair." Yet 54% believed that public institutions were "teaching students the important things they need to know." The concern driving public policy is concern that a great public good (higher education) is now more difficult to access.

In examining the comparison of how voters view higher education and health care, it is clear that the lack of confidence Americans have in their institutions is affecting higher education. 64% of the California sample favored a "basic overhaul," --they knew something was wrong but couldn't pinpoint the problem or propose a solution.

7. K-12 accountability for HIED?

It is in this vacuum that the quantitative, numerically based assessment movement, touches home, falsely promising that it can provide answers...

Reducing the determination of the need programs to the simple terms of "too much duplication." The community college community needs to realize that its own future is bound up in this. Presently OBOR is reviewing doctoral programs. The model they are following comes from two states: Illinois and California.

California's Master Plan for Higher Education developed a three tier system, with the middle tier, the California State University System, offering access to baccalaureates and degrees to the masters. An index of standardized test scores and high school grade point average was used to determine which tier students were placed into. Originally, the top eighth, then the top 12.5%, were allowed into the University of California system. The top 50% were allowed into the California State University System, and community colleges were low tuition and open to all.

Illinois developed a two tier system, with a community college system with definite state assigned boundaries, and only one institution, Southern Illinois University, offering associate degrees. Today in Illinois, only three of its thirteen public universities do not offer doctorates of some kind. The doctoral program review of the Illinois Board of Higher Education did

not consider REAL assessment data, like placement rates of graduates into the field, or length of work in the field ten years after graduation. Instead the Lt, Gov. chaired a committee that simply cut for the sake of cutting.

The Illinois model appears to be the model Ohio is following. Their state SHEEO, Dick Wagner, has held his post for 19 years, since the 1976 election when the Republican party first captured the governorship in that state.

The California model is very relevant in that it appears that OBOR several years ago wished to assign nearly all doctoral responsibility to Ohio State University and the University of Cincinnati, reduce the other institutions to master's level degree granting institutions like the California State University System, and then create a truly comprehensive community college system. Tact is that the state budget of California has in the first term of Governor Wilson been cut by a third. Public higher education faces its sternest challenge from people of both parties--though the problem now is centered in the fringe of one party--that simplistically equate less government with good government. We can only hope that after years out of power that once in power, they will do the right thing. They can, but only with our help. We have a selling job to do here, friends.

It is interesting that both Ohio State and Cincinnati possess a medical school. As a newcomer to the Buckeye state, I have learned that it appears Ohio loves medical education of all kinds and stripes. An interesting note to the recent history of Ohio higher education is that had the Medical College of Ohio been assigned to the University of Toledo, as some locals wanted back in the 1960s, the University of Toledo would today rank among the largest research universities in the nation, alongside Stanford, Berkeley, Ann Arbor, Harvard, Columbus, and Cincinnati.

The noted community college commentator S.V. "Marty" Martorana once said that America has fifty state systems. Ohio's system reflected the fact that Ohio had more cities over 100,000 than any state east of the Mississippi. So it is not surprising that an enlightened legislature would respond to the demand for advanced education by dispersing widely access to doctoral education.

Ohio's community colleges are very much affected by any decline in access of their faculty and staff to doctoral level degrees. Over 60% of all of the deans and presidents of community colleges in this country took their doctorates in higher education administration programs. The next ten years will see dramatic turnover on the part of Ohio's deans and presidents. Where will the next generation of community college leaders come from? This is a role for the doctoral programs.

Yet OBOR looks first to education doctorates to eliminate. Its process was to hire outside experts, allegedly because they

would be "neutral" and therefore protected and above our "polluted" state politics. A colleague of mine who actually studied with Deming has told me that listening is key to understanding Deming's philosophy. This state possesses some of the greatest university faculties in the world, yet it fails to trust them. The retired head of the Union Pacific Railroad once said "the central objective of management is to be good enough to earn the trust of the employees."

Trust is missing in the "restructuring model." The evaluations of OBOR's performance funding programs basically (1) indicated that it had been quite limited in its success, yet (2) it still concluded that the state should change its funding formula to cut program subsidy and cede it to the state to fund.

Why? Why did the cover pages submitted by the contractor, the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, not even list the name of a single person in transmitting their reports, much less a list of their entire research team? It is almost as if NMCHEMS, an outfit that never met a SHEEO or assessment plan it didn't like, was not proud of their own work.

I am frankly concerned. The rhetoric used is a rhetoric with which I can never not agree. At the recent meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education meeting, historian of higher education John Thelin counseled our field to not carelessly imitate the business model. He noted the failure of the businesses of the 1980s (most of Peters and Waterman's business "champions" went bankrupt), as well as

the savings and loan failures. The hot words today are "downsizing" and "restructuring."

I very much fear the increasing numerically based accountability in the style of K-12 will mindlessly restructure American higher education. I fear that a business model of "benchmarking" standards applied to higher education, as noted by the 9 service standards, might lead directly to a rising junior examination, and with it, the decline of independent trusteeship. At any graduation ceremony in this country, the president says two statements: upon the recommendations of the faculty and by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Board of Trustees, I hereby confer these degrees. Rising junior examinations mean that the independent assessments of the faculty--called grades--are not to be trusted, adn that the boards of trustees cannot be trusted to hire good administrators.

I very much fear an interlocking membership of state level higher education policy wonks who think that institutions cannot be trusted, and that higher education can be better administered from the center. It is as if the lesson of abject failure of centralized planning witnessed by sixty-two years of centralized planning in the Soviet Union was lost on our policy wonks today. The advance program for the 1995 Summer Meeting of the Education Commission of the States has the conference theme, "Extending the Reach of Reform." And listed as highlights of this year's National Forum are "college accreditation and quality" --as if we don't have any-- and "restructuring higher education." While you will have "opportunities to network and meet with education policy

leaders from across the nation, including governors..etc." the positions of trustee, college president, community college and faculty are interestingly missing. And remember, the State Higher Education Executive Officers' office, the ECS office, and the NMCHEMS offices are located in the same building.

Today community colleges in Ohio are dealing with their own "restructuring." Yet I suspect that the public citizenry of Ohio will never comprehend the worth of the nine so-called service standards, so they will never know when, or in fact ever believe, that accountability has been achieved. And college presidents will then be at the mercy of the public relations minions of the center, reacting to the latest press release or fax. After all, someone always has to be last on the "benchmarks."

Administrators and in particular trustees should active oppose mindless "restructuring for the sake of restructuring." This does not mean that we do not need refinements, but let us remember that REFORM school is where we send delinquents. America's higher education system is the greatest in the world. So let's reject the very language itself, for it creates the perception of a problem that in fact does not exist.

Ohio's public higher education system, excepting the glaring deficiency of a comprehensive community college system, is not is not in need of radical restructuring.

In my reading of the various OBOR reports, it was interesting to note that nearly every single suggestion included a call for increasing the power of the center. My advice is that

centralization failed in the Soviet Union, and it will fail in the long run in Ohio higher education.

In the short run, my advice for you is to not "sit out" the OBOR program review of the state's higher education doctoral programs. If those programs are cut, each of your institutions loses. Don't leave your four year friends out on the limb; help them. Someday it might be you who needs the help.

Remember enlightened self interest: In preserving these programs, you are helping the professional development of your own faculty and staff. Do not wait for them to call you; call them and volunteer to help, and in the letter to your fellow president citing the role of these programs, send a copy to your local legislator.

And let us remember that in the final analysis, Legislatures justify funding on the basis of bodies, despite concerns for "quality" (which are nearly impossible to define). Thus, the battle to preserve program funding is a battle for access.

Let us not forsake our access heritage at the tail end of mindless adherence to a failed rhetoric. Let us instead celebrate the proud heritage of our past, remembering the words of the late Delyte Wesley Morris of Southern Illinois University, who often said:

The purpose of a public institution of higher education is to provide access of opportunity, so that as many can achieve as much and go as far as they possibly can. Thank you.